

ECHO 2015 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes 9-8-11

Present: Co-Chair Doug Forsythe and Bob Staples and members Jennifer Newell, Ann Way, Helen Kutz, Ginny Corson, April Doshier, and Debra Krittenbrink. Also present were staff Linda Price and Lisa Krieg.

Absent: Member Teresa Capps

Others present: Practicum student with East Main Place – Ginny Lights.

The meeting was called to order by Doug Forsythe at 4:00 p.m.

UPDATE ON THE STATUS OF FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAMS

EMERGENCY SHELTER GRANT (ESG)

The 2011 ESG applications were as follows: Bridges (\$50,000), Food & Shelter for Friends (\$50,000), East Main Place (\$50,000), Thunderbird Clubhouse (\$50,000), The Salvation Army (\$25,000), and the Women's Resource Center (\$25,000). COCAA also submitted an application. Only one application was funded fully – East Main Place. Two were partially funded - \$25,000 for Thunderbird Clubhouse and \$25,000 for Women's Resource Center. Food & Shelter, Bridges, and The Salvation Army received no funding. Scores for the denied grants have been requested. A second funding round may occur later in the year with new regulations that will be similar to the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program. Forty percent (40%) of the funds will be required to be used for prevention.

Continuum of Care

The Continuum of Care application is due at the end of October 2011. Cleveland County's pro rata share will be up about \$10,000 from last year.

EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER PROGRAM (EFSP)

This FEMA program provided \$67,105, \$21,460 less than in 2010. The funding is for utilities and rent, emergency shelter, and food for food pantries. The utility assistance funding is for Food & Shelter as is the emergency shelter funding. Rent assistance is through COCAA as well as half of the food funding. The Salvation Army is receiving the other food funding.

UPDATE ON STATUS OF STIMULUS FUNDING FOR THE HOMELESS PREVENTION AND RAPID REHOUSING PROGRAM (HPRP)

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included funding for a one time stimulus program titled the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program. This is a three year program that will end in June 2012 or when the funding runs out. Only approximately \$144,000 remains and an average of \$30,000 is expended each month. An average of 12 families per week is being assisted (48 each month). Most are families with young children. Most families receive both utility and rent assistance. A suggestion was made that now would be a good time to request press coverage on the growing problem of homelessness and the impact that will be felt when the HPRP funding is gone in addition to the loss of ESG funding.

CHANGES IN THE CONTINUUM OF CARE COMMITTEE

The committee has been meeting monthly, but is changing to quarterly. A core group of the shelter directors, Lisa Krieg, and Rene O'Leary from United Way will continue to meet monthly. They will rotate the meeting locations so that all members will become more aware of shelter locations, the facilities, and the different programs.

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION

A wide-ranging discussion on the increased demand for assistance was held. Agencies are receiving many inquiries from families with children, and the chronically homeless who are living on the street. Often there are 10-15 street people at Food & Shelter at night. More units are needed for families, and a single-room occupancy (SRO) is needed for the people who live primarily on the street. A safe haven would be best for the street singles. [A safe haven is a shelter that is usually single-room occupancy (SRO), and has few rules. They are often called "wet shelters" because they will allow stays for homeless persons who are still drinking or using drugs. The reasoning for this is to at least get the chronically homeless into shelter that is not so intimidating with the hope that they will start to access services and potentially get into more permanent housing.] It was also noted that the extreme heat caused many health issues that required ambulances to be called on an almost daily basis to Food & Shelter.

Ginny Corson with East Main Place advised that a Norman businessman purchased 6 units in duplexes for East Main Place to house homeless families. He provides funding for rent and utilities, and uses the donations as a tax deduction. This set up has been very successful for East Main Place, the families, and the owner. It would be wonderful if this model could be duplicated to assist other agency clients.

Discussion was also held on updating the City Council on the rising homeless population, the reduced funding, and potential assistance that would be beneficial. The Chair requested that each member ponder the nature of assistance that might be requested and to email it so that the information can be compiled. Once the information is compiled, the Chair will request a joint meeting with City Council.

- The next quarterly meeting will be at 4:00 p.m. on December 1, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.